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The International Swim Schools Association represents a diverse range of leading aquatic educators, who are engaged in providing positive learning experiences for the children and families they serve.

There are a wide range of needs served by these Swim Schools and individual swimming teachers. The culture and area of the world in which they operate can influence which needs are prioritised.

In regions where paediatric drowning is prevalent, water safety and drowning prevention are often given a strong focus. Other's primary aim may be to develop parent-child bonding and attachment, along with a broad scope of developmental benefits for the child. These areas of focus are not mutually exclusive, and all should be addressed by all programs.

While swim schools deliver services in a variety of locations, including natural waterways, providing a healthy environment is crucial to ensure the well being of all participants. Properly maintained swimming pools are the most effective place to provide a clean environment, making learning to swim one of the most hygienic activities children can do.

ISSA Position Statement #5

Swim Schools Are An Essential Family and Community Service

Swim Schools all over the world provide families and communities essential, lifesaving services. Swimming lessons are in fact the only activity that can save a child's life, while also enhancing their health, well-being and family connections.

They build long term, trusted relationships with children and their families and are a unique hub for the aquatic education and communication they provide.

Weekly lessons are where the essential skills that save lives are developed. The connection with the child, teachers and caregivers within the learning environment of the swim school are what make these things possible. Children need continuity to learn, retain and further develop these swimming skills and it's important to engage with the process throughout the year as much as possible - Disruption to this routine delays progress and may cost lives.

Learning to swim, developing water safety skills, gaining developmental benefits and building better interpersonal relationships makes learning to swim at swim schools the most important children's activity, and perhaps the only activity that will save a child's life.

Swim Schools help reduce the significant economic and social burden of drowning providing further support and positive impact on the community.

A significant and impactful point of action for all Swim Schools is that they are well placed to influence, support and actively participate in efforts to drive community goals that aim to increase the number of children able to swim by the time they reach identified milestones, e.g. grade 3 (age 9) at primary school.

Some of the compelling evidence:

The *Early Years Swimming – Adding Capital to Young Australians* study completed at Griffith University in 2013 shows profound benefits across all areas of a child's development that are unique to learn to swim.

The United Nations resolution on Global Drowning Prevention stated they are "Deeply concerned that drowning has been the cause of over 2.5 million preventable deaths in the past decade, but has been largely unrecognized relative to its impact." In response to this concern, the UN identified 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Swim Schools offer practical and proactive resources and pathways to achieving the SDGs.

The World Health Organisation states "Drowning is a serious and neglected public health threat claiming the lives of 372 000 people a year worldwide ... with children aged under 5 years disproportionately at risk."

Various reports including two: from the UK (Swim England News) and Australia (RLSSA), note that extremely high numbers of children (over 1 million in the UK) will be unable to swim when they leave primary school.

"The Lifesaving Society has been collecting data on drowning in Canada for over 30 years, and what we have found from that research tells us that learning to swim is one of the most effective drowning prevention strategies." Barb Byers, Senior Research Officer for the Lifesaving Society of Canada

The American Academy of Pediatrics says "Children and parents should learn to swim and learn water-safety skills ... There is evidence that swim lessons may reduce the risk of drowning, including for those 1 to 4 years of age."

"There are clear links between children's early experience, emotional well-being and later performance in school and life." (Geddes, H. 2018) "Early care-giving has a long-lasting impact on development, the ability to learn, capacity to regulate emotions and form satisfying relationships" (Daniel J. Siegel 2003) "To share in an activity that fosters secure attachment is as enjoyable and beneficial for parents as for baby." (Ulrika Faerch author to Happy Babies Swim)

"... the estimated aggregate cost of drowning ... was \$146.9B. Despite the vast majority of deaths due to drowning occurring in low and middle income countries, the economic burden was split relatively evenly between these and high income countries ..." (RNLI: Woolley, Lovenich and Ryan 2015)

Additional supporting information on the essential role of swim schools is provided in ISSA Position Statements #1 and #2:

ISSA Position Statement #1 Why Swim Schools are so vital and the benefits they provide

<https://assa-website.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/resources/swim+schools/international-swim-school/ISSA-Position-Statement-1-Why-Swim-Schools-Are-Vital-ENDORSED.pdf>

ISSA Position Statement #2 The benefits of swimming and water safety skills in drowning prevention

<https://assa-website.s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/resources/swim+schools/international-swim-school/ISSA-Position-Statement-2-Drowning-Prevention-ENDORSED.pdf>

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